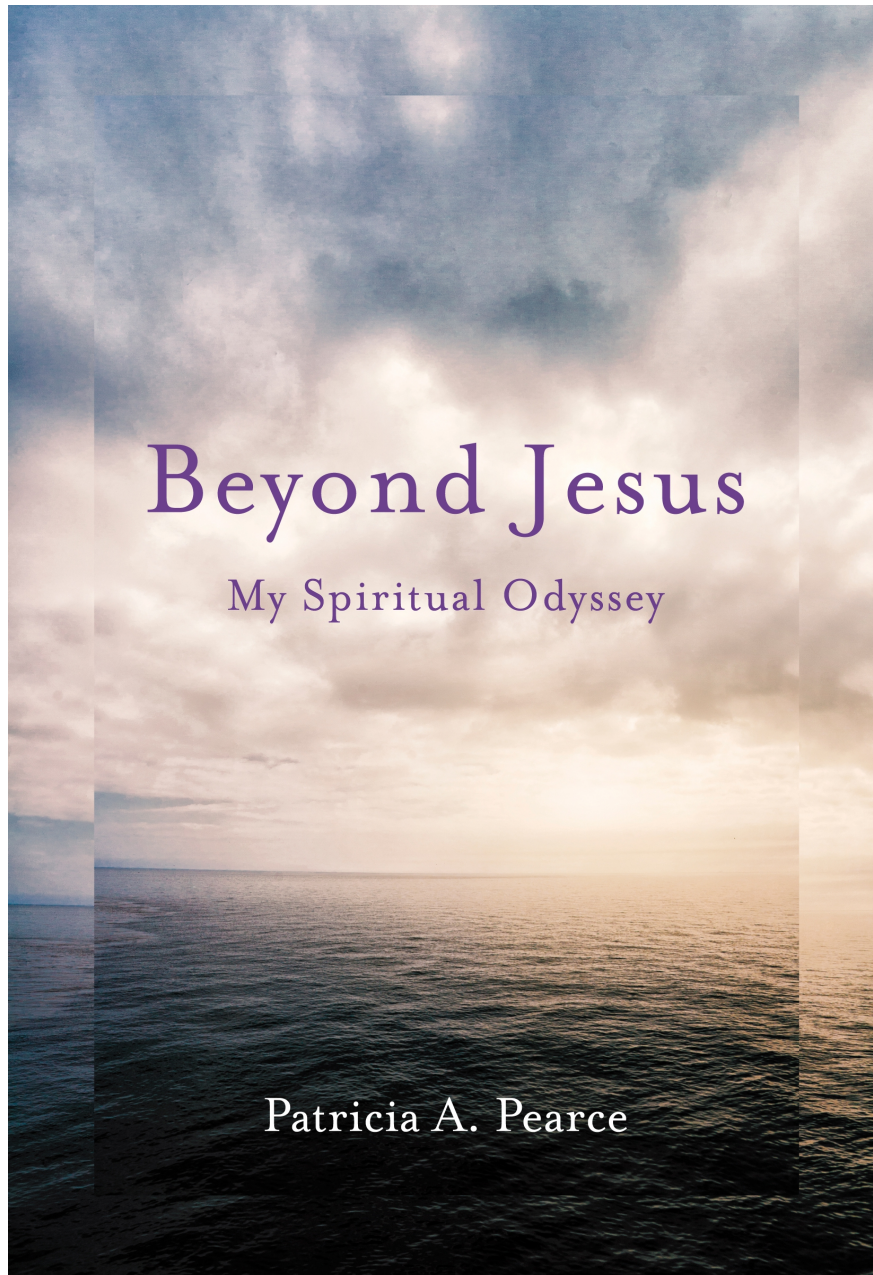


Study Guide



Study Guide for
Beyond Jesus: My Spiritual Odyssey
by Patricia Pearce

General Reflection Questions

- What were your overall reactions to the book?
- What were some passages that stood out for you?
- What aspects of Patricia's story could you most identify with? What aspects could you least identify with?
- Were there things in the book that challenged you or disturbed you? What were they?
- Were there things in the book that you found uplifting or encouraging? What were they?
- Did you have any *aha* moments while reading the book?
- Did the book change your perspectives in any way? If so, how and about what?
- What do you think are the wider implications of this book's message about Jesus? About Christianity? About empire? About consciousness and collective awakening?
- What lessons will you take away from this book that may have a lasting impact on your life?
- If you have read Patricia Pearce's parable *No One in I Land: A Parable of Awakening*, did you notice similarities between it and *Beyond Jesus*? Does knowing her personal story shed any light for you on the parable she wrote?
- Having read this book, if you could ask the author one question, what would it be?

Exploring the Themes in Beyond Jesus

Grief and Spiritual Growth

In Patricia's journey, loss and grief were important catalysts for her spiritual growth.

Have you ever experienced this to be the case in your own life? Why do you think we often seem to need such experiences to open ourselves to the spiritual dimension in our lives?

Patriarchal Religion

Patricia talks about the painful awareness she came to that the misogyny that leads to sexual assault was embedded in the religion of her upbringing, and she also talks about having to come to terms with the sexism she herself had internalized.

How did this theme in the book affect you? How do you see the effects of patriarchal religion and misogyny playing out in our world today? Do you think this is changing?

Mysticism

Patricia shares many mystical experiences in the book which her religious upbringing did not equip her to understand or easily integrate, and which she kept largely to herself. √

Do you think there is acceptance in our culture for these types of experiences? What about our religious communities? Have you had spiritual experiences you have kept to yourself out of fear they wouldn't be understood by others?

Synchronicities

Patricia shares many synchronicities that she experienced which caused her rational and materialistic worldview to collapse.

Have you ever experienced such synchronicities in your own life—"coincidences" that were simply too impossible to ignore? If so, how did you respond? Have you ever undergone a radical shift in your worldview or belief system?

Interspirituality

In Patricia's journey, she explores other spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, shamanism, and Wicca in order to understand her spiritual experiences and find a way to integrate them.

Have you explored different spiritual traditions? If so, what commonalities have you discovered among them? What differences?

Ego and Jesus

After Patricia's spiritual awakening, she comes to see how much ego consciousness had shaped Christian belief.

How did this theme in the book affect you? What do you think are the ramifications of this insight?

The Nature of Power

Patricia wrestles with her understanding of power and to what degree humans participate in power as co-creators.

How do you understand the nature of power? What role do you think humans play in the unfolding of life and the expansion of consciousness?

Solidarity and Civil Disobedience

Patricia shares her experiences of engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience, including going to prison, and of accompanying and standing in solidarity with those who are being oppressed and targeted.

How did this theme in the book affect you? Did you agree or disagree with the choices she made? Have you ever done anything similar, or could you imagine doing so? Do you see this sort of action as an expression of spirituality, or are politics and spirituality separate in your understanding?

Humanity's Narrative of Violence

When she visits Ground Zero with her friend whose father had been killed there, Patricia describes the extreme grief she felt about humanity's captivity to a narrative of violence.

How did this chapter affect you? What do you think keeps us captive to the narrative of violence, and how might we break free from it?

Empire and Ego

Patricia talks about how the political and economic structure of empire is ego consciousness expressing itself in the political and economic arena.

Do you agree? If so, what are the implications for achieving lasting change in our social, economic, and political structures?

The Holocaust

From an early age, Patricia was haunted by the Holocaust and wanted to comprehend how such a thing could happen.

Do you find yourself struggling with similar questions? What do you think were the factors that contributed to the Holocaust? What do you think our present time is calling us to do to assure that such an atrocity doesn't ever happen again?

Prison and Ego Separateness

When she serves a week in jail for civil disobedience, Patricia comes to see how prison is an extreme expression of the ego mind that dwells in the experience of separateness and isolation.

How did this chapter affect you? Do you sometimes feel imprisoned in your own thought systems or beliefs?

Transform Story

At the height of her awakening, Patricia comprehends that we are living in a dream state induced by the ego mind, and that our primary task is to transform the underlying story that is shaping our world and our experience of it.

What are some of the stories you believe are guiding us at this juncture of our history and evolution? What story do you believe would help us in this turbulent moment of our history when so much seems to be at stake?

The Spiritual Path

Patricia's journey speaks to the role of intention, surrender, and letting go as part of the spiritual path.

Have you experienced this to be the case in your own life? What are some of the ways you have experienced them?

Spiritual Alienation

As Patricia's journey takes her beyond the bounds of conventional Christianity, she feels herself to be a spiritual nomad with no place of belonging or community to call her spiritual home.

Does this experience resonate with you in any way? What do you think are the consequences, personally and collectively, of this sort of spiritual isolation? Do you think the feeling of alienation from the tradition might be a contributing factor in current decline of the mainline church?

Collective Awakening

Patricia suggests that we are in a time in which we must move beyond the egoic notion of separateness and collectively awaken to the realization of our oneness.

Do you agree? If so, how can each of us support this awakening? Do you think our religious traditions can support this shift? If so, how might they need to change?

Other Themes

Were there other themes in the book that particularly interested you? What were they, and how did they speak to you?



Additional Readings by Patricia Pearce

No One in I Land: A Parable of Awakening

This book touches on many of the themes in Beyond Jesus in a playful story accessible to all ages. Available on [Amazon](#).

Awakening to Love in a Time of Fear: Five Essential Practices

This short ebook presents practices to help you move into the Reality of Love in an age of division and fear. Available for free when you sign up for [Patricia's newsletter](#).

www.patriciapearce.com